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An Eye for a Spy ...

In his analytical essay on the detective story, "The Gentle Art of Murder," the late Raymond Chandler has the following opinion; "The English may not be the best writers, but they are the best dull writers" Chandler was



speaking of the formalized Brit-ish detective stories before the Hammetts and the old Black Mask writers like Chandler brought the hard-boiled private Chandler eye school into prominence. It is: too bad that neither Chandler nor. Hammett are with us. It would be interesting, for instance, to read what a Chandler would have to say about the two trends in the detective story since the last! World War. For the English, or at least an English outlook, are back on top again.

I am a man who can put away three or even four detective stories a night (if I discover I have read one or more of them before, and that sometimes takes 25 pages) and it is plain enough that the idiotic James Bond has sent thriller writing off on a

whole new course. What, one must wonder, would Chandler have, thought of today's fictional international spies? Or, for that matter, what he would have thought of the equally lunatic, blood-and-guts private eyes of the Mike Hammer school.

It was doubtless the Sherlock Holmes heritage which was responsible for the earlier English school. These erudite British sleuths operated in a sort of social aspic. The sleuth might be a doctor, or a wispish young astocrat, or even the rector or his vicar. Or an eccentric old gal. These early crime studies were full of amateur detectives who said "Harr-umph" and took the police to task for "jiggery pokery," whatever that is. But they wrapped the whole case up in the last few pages and then everybody went back to the drawing room or to tiffin, or wherever.

As Chandler said in his essay, such amateurs may have played havoc with countryside British constables, but he hated to think what the boys down at Homicide would have done to them. The Chandlers, and the Hammetts knew cops and they knew characters. Part of the, quality of the great years of the tough Private Eyes was their plausibility.

And then, just to carry a good thing too far, came the Mike Hammers and all the rest of the sexy, muscled and sadistic, impossibly named imitators. Mike's bit was to beat the bejabbers out of a guy, jump into bed with a broad, beat up somebody else, have broad jump in bed with him, get beaten up, have another broad. . .

well, it went on into the yawn.

Today all is different. Today the setting must be some exotic spot in Europe. And there the British super spy works his intelligence and counter intelligence. No longer is human fate enough. Today the fictional sleuth is in the business of saving entire nations.

Eric Ambler was doing the same thing years ago-his "A Coffin for Dimitrios" is a classic—but never got the attention the James Bonds and secret agents are getting today. Perhaps because Ambler's sleuths did not work for that stereotyped, mumbling, fumbling dreary old man who runs M5, or whatever it is, in all the new apy books.

I gave up on our own CIA when Allen Dulles wrote in a magazine that he had asked his men to actually try and reproduce a James Bond gimmick of following a car electronically. Mr. Dulles' experts said it was impractical. The narcotics squad in New York was doing that years ago and may still be, for all anybody knows.

So the day of the cops and robbers is over for the time being, Approved For Kellerise 2011 10 1/2/2011 11/2011 11/2010 11/201 Russia. Stack your hero up against this enemy That's where the money is